

DUNNO'S ADVENTURES

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Nikolai NOSOV



How DUNNO Became a POET



RADUGA PUBLISHERS



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HOW DUNNO BECAME A POET

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hen nothing came of Dunno's efforts to become an artist, he decided to become a poet. He knew a poet who lived in Dandelion Street. The real name of this poet was Turnips, but since all poets like to have beautiful names, he chose another for himself.

He called himself Posey.

One day Dunno went to see Posey and said to him: "Teach me how to write, Posey. I want to be a poet."

"Have you any talent?" asked Posey.

"Of course I have. I'm very talented," said Dunno.

"We shall see about that," said Posey. "Do you know how a rhyme is made?"

"A rhyme? What's that?"

"A rhyme is made by finding words that end in the same sound, like 'tickle, pickle', 'berry, cherry'. Is that clear?"

"It is."

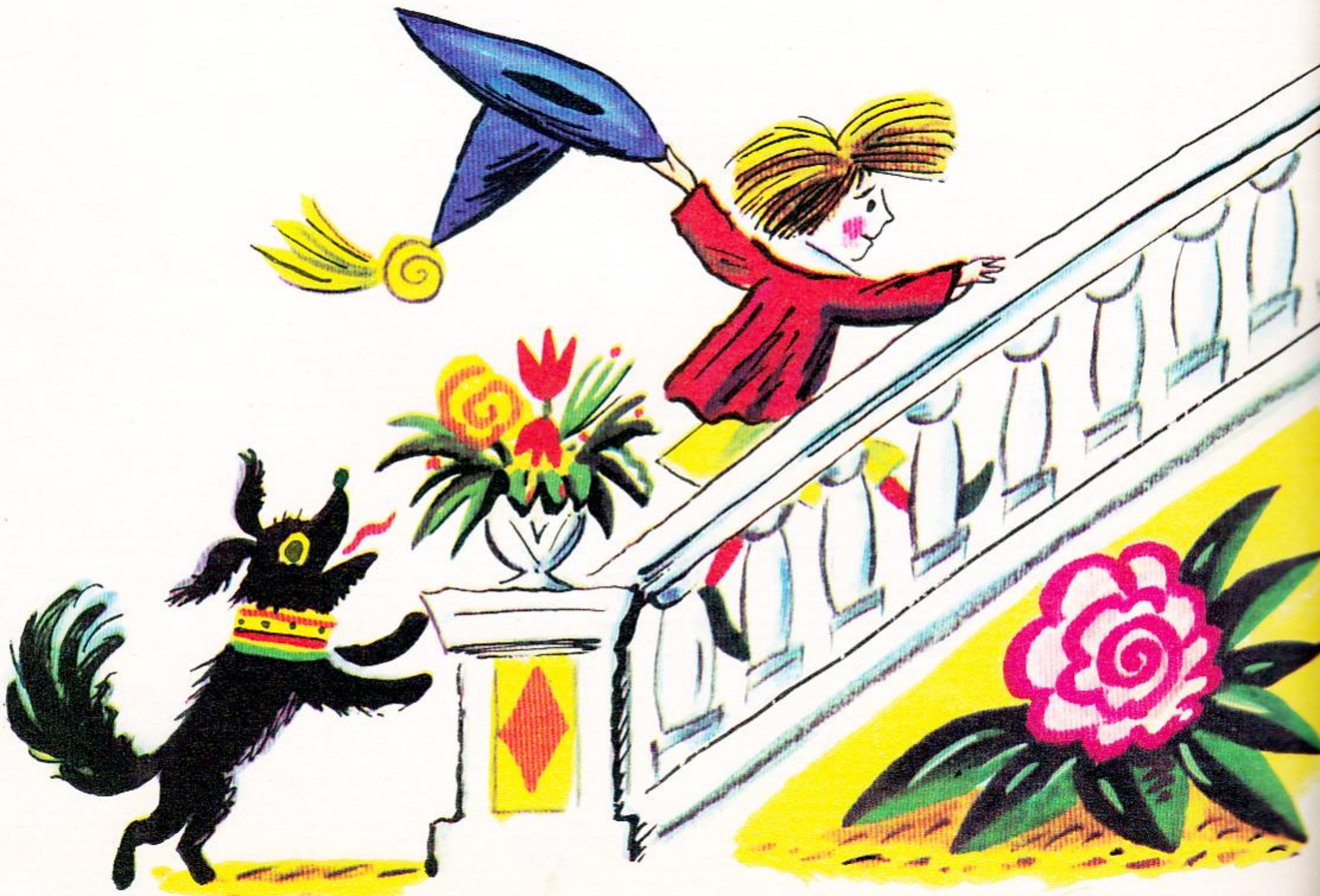
"Then give me a rhyme for 'waiter'."

"'Mister'," said Dunno.

"Silly," said Posey. "'Mister' doesn't rhyme with 'waiter'."

"Why not?" said Dunno. "They both end in the same sound."

"Not just the last sound—next to the last has to rhyme too, like: 'mother, brother'; 'simple, pimple'; 'tender, fender'."







"Oh, I see!" cried Dunno. "Mother, brother; simple, pimple; tender, fender. That's lots of fun!"

"Then think of a rhyme for 'scissors'," said Posey.

"Zizzers," said Dunno.

"What are 'zizzers'?" asked Posey. "There is no such word as zizzers."

"Isn't there?"

"Of course, there isn't."

"Then 'fizzers'."

"What are 'fizzers'?" asked Posey, more surprised than ever.

"Fizzers? Why, things that fiz."

"You just made that up," said Posey. "There is no such word. You've got to choose real words, and not just make up any odd word."

"And what if I can't choose a real word?"

"That means you have no poetic talent."

"Very well, you think of a rhyme for 'scissors'," said Dunno.

"Just a minute," said Posey.

He stood in the middle of the room, crossed his arms on his chest, cocked his head on one side, and began to think. Then he threw back his head and





stared at the ceiling and thought. Then he took his chin in his hands and stared at the floor and thought. When he had done all this he began to walk up and down, muttering to himself:

“Scissors, mizzers, bizzers, nizzers, rizzers...” He went on muttering for a long time, and at last he said:

“Oh, bother it! There just isn’t any rhyme to that word!”

“You see!” gloated Dunno. “You yourself gave me a word that has no rhyme and then you say I have no talent.”

“Maybe you have, but for goodness’ sake leave me alone,” said Posey. “My head’s going round. Write anything you like as long as it rhymes and makes sense, and that will be a poem.”

“Is it really so easy?” said Dunno.

“Yes, all you need is talent.”

Dunno went home, and as soon as he got there he sat down and began to write poetry.

All day long he walked up and down, staring now at the floor, now at the ceiling, holding his chin in his hands, and muttering to himself.

At last the poems were ready.

"Listen, everybody!" he said. "I've written some poems."

"How nice! What are your poems about?" said his friends.

"About you," said Dunno. "The first one's about Doono:

*Doono went out for a walk one day,
And jumped over a lamb that stood in his way."*

"What?" cried Doono. "When did I ever jump over a lamb?"





"That's just for the sake of the rhyme," explained Dunno.

"And for the sake of the rhyme you mean to make up all sorts of fibs about me?" said the infuriated Doono.

"Yes, I do," said Dunno. "I couldn't make up true things, could I?"

"You just try doing it again!" warned Doono. "Have you made up fibs about the others, too?"

"Here's one about Swifty:

*Hungry Swifty, I am told,
Ate an iron that was cold."*



"Hear that?" cried Swifty. "Hear what he says about me? I never ate a cold iron in my life!"

"Don't shout. I said it was cold just for the sake of the rhyme."

"But I never ate a hot one, either," cried Swifty.

"Well, I didn't say you ate a hot one, so there's nothing for you to get excited about," said Dunno. "Now listen to my poem about P'raps:

*Under his pillow P'raps found
A cake that weighed a half a pound."*





P'raps ran over to his bed and looked under the pillow.

"There's no cake under my pillow," he said.

"You don't understand poetry," said Dunno. "Of course there's no cake there. I just said there was for the sake of the rhyme. I've written a poem about Dr. Pillman too."

"We've got to put a stop to this, friends," cried Dr. Pillman. "Are we to stand calmly by and let him go on telling fibs about us?"

"No, we aren't!" agreed everybody. "We won't have any more of it! They aren't poems at all. He's just making fun of us."

But Doono, Swifty, and P'raps wanted to hear the other poems.



“Let him read them,” they said. “If he read about us, why shouldn’t he read about you?”

“We won’t have it! We won’t listen!” the others cried.

“Very well, if you don’t want to listen I’ll go and read them to the neighbours,” said Dunno.

“What!” they cried. “Disgrace us in front of the neighbours! If you do, you had better not come home!”

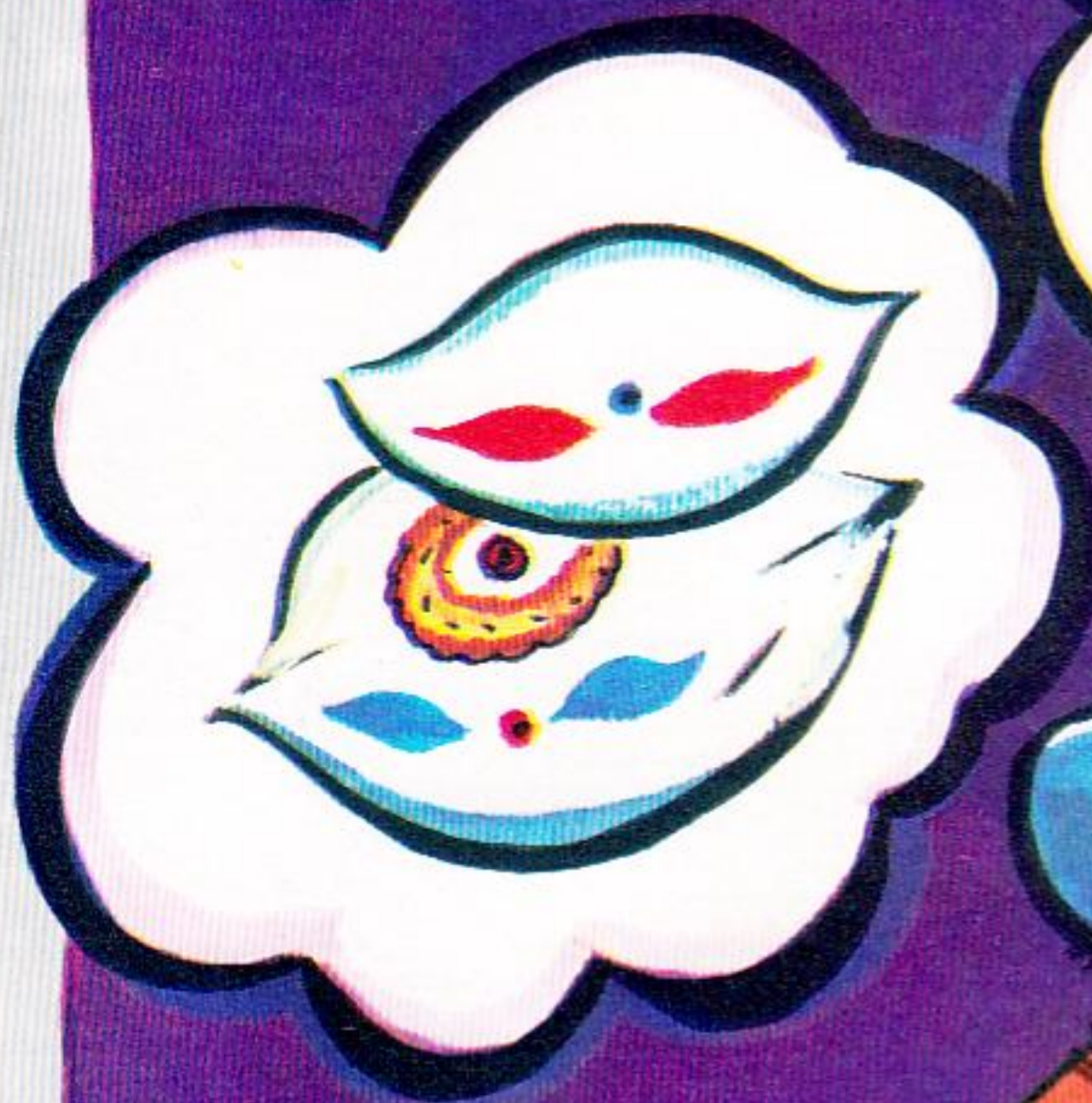
“Oh, all right, I won’t then,” said Dunno. “Don’t be angry with me.”

And he resolved never to write another poem.



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You can read about more adventures of Dunno and this friends
from Flower Town in
HOW DUNNO TOOK A RIDE IN A SODA-WATER CAR
and HOW DOONO MADE A BALLOON